

F 12

NOTE: While final details remain to be settled concerning the text of the President's address to the Nation, its substance will basically reflect the following draft. RELEASE DATE 2/16/55
REVIEWED BY DATE 2/16/55
XERXES 10/21/62
FOLIO NO OR FILE NO. 10/21/62

Good evening, my fellow citizens:

CLASSIFY AS CABR

DOWNGRADE TS to S or C, OADR

This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest

surveillance of the Soviet military build-up on the island of Cuba. Within the past week, ~~unmistakable~~ evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive nuclear missile sites is now in preparation on that unhappy island. Upon receiving the first ~~unmistakable~~ information of this nature last Tuesday morning at 9 a. m. ~~we had ever received -- I directed that our surveillance~~ stepped up. And having now confirmed and completed our surveillance, ~~and our~~ evidence and our ~~greatest concern~~ ^{decision on} a course of action, this Government feels obliged to report the new crisis to you in full detail.

Several of these new sites are for Medium Range Ballistic Missiles, capable of carrying a nuclear warhead for a distance of more than 1000 nautical miles. Each of these missiles, in short, is capable of striking Washington, D. C., the Panama Canal, Cape Canaveral, Mexico City, or any other city in the Southeastern part of the United States, in Central America or in the Caribbean area.

Additional sites not yet completed appear to be designed for Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles -- capable of travelling more than 1000 miles as far and thus capable of striking most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere, ranging as far north as Hudson's Bay, Canada and

as far south as Lima, Peru. In addition, medium range jet bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, are now being uncrated and assembled on Cuba, while the necessary air bases are being prepared.

This urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base -- by the presence of these large, long-range and clearly offensive weapons of sudden mass destruction -- constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas, in flagrant and deliberate defiance of the Rio Pact of 1947, the traditions of this nation and Hemisphere, the Joint Resolution of the 87th Congress, the Charter of the United Nations, and my own public warnings to the Soviets on September 4 and 13. This action also contradicts the repeated assurances of Soviet spokesmen, both publicly and privately delivered, that the arms build-up in Cuba would retain its original defensive character, and that the Soviet Union had no need or desire to station strategic missiles on the territory of any other nation.

The size of this undertaking makes clear that it had been planned some months ago. Yet only last month, after I had made clear the distinction between any introduction of ground-to-ground missiles and the existence of defensive anti-aircraft missiles, the Soviet Government publicly stated on September 11 that "the armaments and military equipment sent to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes", that "there is no need for the Soviet Union to shift its weapons . . . for a retaliatory blow to any other country, for instance Cuba", and that "the Soviet Union has

"powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union." That statement, I regret to say, was patently false.

Only last Thursday, as evidence of this rapid offensive build-up was in my hand, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko told me in my office that he was instructed to make it clear once again, as he said his Government had already done, that Soviet assistance to Cuba "pursued solely the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba", that "training by Soviet specialists of Cuban nationals in handling defensive armaments was by no means offensive", and that "if it were otherwise, the Soviet Government would never become involved in rendering such assistance." That statement also was dishonest and dishonorable.

Neither the United States of America nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute a breach of Article 51 of the UN Charter. Nuclear weapons are so destructive, and ballistic missiles are so swift, that any substantially increased possibility of their use or any sudden change in their deployment ^{may well} ~~will~~ be regarded as a definite threat to the peace.

For many years, both the Soviet Union and the United States -- recognizing this fact -- have deployed strategic nuclear weapons with great care, never upsetting the precarious status quo which ensured that

these weapons would not be used in the absence of some vital challenge. Our own strategic missiles have never been transferred to the territory of any other nation under a cloak of secrecy and deception; and our history -- unlike that of the Soviets since World War II -- demonstrates that we have no desire to dominate or conquer any other nation or impose our system upon its people. Nevertheless, American citizens have become adjusted to living daily on the bull's eye of Soviet missiles located inside the USSR or in submarines. In that sense, missiles in Cuba add to an already clear and present danger -- although, it should be noted, the nations of Latin America have never previously been subjected to a potential nuclear threat.

But this secret, swift and extraordinary build-up of communist missiles -- in an area well-known to have a special and historical relationship to the United States and the nations of the Western Hemisphere -- in violation of Soviet assurances, in suddenly stationing strategic weapons for the first time outside of Soviet soil, in defiance of American and Hemispheric policy -- is a deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country. If our courage and our commitments are ever to be trusted again by either friend or foe.

The 1930's taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to grow unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. This nation is opposed to war. We are also true to our word. Our

Our long objective, therefore, must be to prevent the use of these missiles against this or any other country, and to secure their disbarrowal or elimination from the Western Hemisphere.

Our policy has been one of patience and restraint, as befits a peaceful and powerful nation. We were determined not to be diverted from our central concerns by mere irritants and fanatics. But further action is now required -- and it is underway; and these actions may only be the beginning. We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of world-wide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth -- but let every nation know, be it friend or foe, that we will not shrink from that risk at any time it must be faced.

Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and that of the entire Western Hemisphere, and under the authority entrusted to me by the Constitution as endorsed by the Resolution of the Congress, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

1) First: to halt this offensive build-up, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships bound for Cuba, from whatever nation or port, will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back. This quarantine will be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers. We are not at this time, however, denying access or the necessities of life as the Soviets attempted to do in their Berlin blockade of 1948.

2) Second: I have directed the continued and increased close surveillance of Cuba and its military build-up. The Foreign Ministers of the OAS in their communique of October 6 rejected secrecy on such matters in this Hemisphere. Should offensive military preparations continue, thus increasing the threat to the Hemisphere, further action will be undertaken. I have directed the armed forces to prepare for any eventualities: and I trust that, in the interest of both the Cuban people and the Soviet technicians at these sites, our inability to tolerate this threat will be recognized.

3) Third: It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

4) Fourth: As a necessary military precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo, evacuated the dependents of our personnel there and ordered additional military units to stand by on an alert basis.

5) Fifth: We are calling tonight for an immediate meeting of the Organ of Consultation under the Organization of American States, to consider this threat to hemispheric security and to invoke Articles 6 and 8 of the Rio Treaty in support of all necessary action. Our other allies around the world have also been alerted.

6) Sixth: Under the Charter of the United Nations -- and we subscribe to that Charter -- we are asking tonight that an emergency meeting of the Security Council be convoked without delay to take action against this latest Soviet threat to world peace. Our Resolution will call for the dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive ~~Soviet~~ bases and weapons in Cuba, under the supervision of UN observers, before the quarantine can be lifted.

7) Seventh: and finally: I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless and provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations. I call upon him further to abandon this course of world domination, and to join with me and others in an historic effort to end the perilous arms race and transform the history of man. He has an opportunity now to move the world back from the abyss of destruction -- by ~~returning~~ ^{own} to his government's words that it had no need to station missiles outside its own territory, and withdrawing these weapons from Cuba -- by refraining from any action which will widen or deepen the present crisis -- and ^{by} ~~they~~ resuming our search for peaceful and permanent solutions.

This nation is prepared to present its case against this Soviet threat to peace and our own proposals for a peaceful world at any time and in any forum -- in the OAS, in the United Nations, or in any other ~~appropriate~~ ^{appropriate} meeting that could be useful. We have in the past made strenuous efforts to limit the spread of nuclear

weapons. We have proposed the elimination of all arms and overseas bases in a fair and effective disarmament treaty. We are prepared to discuss new proposals for the removal of tensions on both sides -- including the possibilities of a genuinely independent Cuba, free to determine its own destiny. We have no wish to war with the Soviet Union; for we are a peaceful people who desire to live in peace with all other peoples.

But it is difficult to settle or even discuss these problems in an atmosphere of intimidation. That is why this latest Soviet threat -- or any other threat which is made either independently or in response to our actions this week -- must and will be met with determination. Any hostile action anywhere in the world against the safety and freedom of peoples to whom we are committed -- including the brave people of West Berlin -- will be met by whatever action is needed.

Finally, I want to say a few words to the captive people of Cuba, to whom this speech is being directly carried by every available medium. I speak to you as a friend, as an admirer of your dedication to freedom and justice, as one who knows of your deep attachment to your fatherland. Long with my fellow Americans, I have shared the great hopes of your nationalist revolution promising liberty and justice for all. And I have watched with deep sorrow how the ideals of that revolution were betrayed -- and how your fatherland fell under foreign domination. Now your leaders are longer Cuban leaders -- inspired by the great principles of your nationalist revolution. -- They are puppets and agents of an international conspiracy which

has turned Cuba into a base of aggression against your friends and neighbors in the Americas. These new weapons are not in your interest. They contribute nothing to your peace and well-being. They cannot even contribute to the security of Cuba but only undermine it. We know you did not consent to the transformation of your island into a target for nuclear war -- the first Latin American country to become involved in this grim confrontation -- the first Latin American country to have these weapons on its soil.

That is why we have no quarrel with you, the people of Cuba, only sympathy and hope. We know your lives and land are being used as pawns by those who deny you freedom. We have no wish to cause you to suffer or to impose any system upon you.

Many times in the past, the Cuban people have risen to throw out tyrants -- both foreign and domestic -- who tried to destroy their liberty. And I have no doubt that the vast majority of Cubans today look forward to the time when they will once again be free -- free to choose their own leaders, free to select their own system, free to own their own land, free to speak and write and worship without fear or degradation. And when foreign domination is ended, and the use of Cuba as a base of subversion and aggression has ceased, we shall gladly welcome her back to the society of free nations and to the associations of this Hemisphere. For our goal in the world today is peace and freedom -- and that includes the peace and freedom of the Cuban people.

My fellow citizens: let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out. No one can foresee precisely what course it will take or what costs or casualties will be incurred. Many months of sacrifice and self-discipline lie ahead -- months in which both our will and our patience will be tested by those who would have us do more and those who would have us do less -- months in which many threats and denunciations will keep us aware of our danger. But the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing -- to be paralyzed by fear -- to go back on our word.

The path we have chosen for the present is not perfect, as no path is -- but it is the one most consistent with our character and courage as a nation and our commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high -- but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose is the path of surrender or submission.

Our goal is not the victory of might but the vindication of right -- not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this Hemisphere, and, we hope, around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved.

* * *

TRANSCRIBED PAGES FOLLOW

NOTE: While final details remain to be settled concerning the text of the President's address to the nation, its substance will basically reflect the following draft:

10/20/62

Good evening, my fellow citizens:

This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the communist military build-up on the island of Cuba. Only within the last week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive nuclear missile bases is now under intensive preparation on that unhappy island. Upon receiving the first preliminary information of this nature last Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. [?] information of this nature we had ever received - I directed that our surveillance be stepped up. And having now confirmed and completed our evaluation of the evidence and our decision on a course of action, this Government feels obliged to report the new crisis to you in full detail.

Several of these new missile sites are for Medium Range Ballistic Missiles, capable of carrying a nuclear warhead for a distance of more than 1000 nautical miles. Each of these missiles, in short, is capable of striking Washington, D.C., the Panama Canal, Cape Canaveral, Florida, Mexico City, or any other city in the Southeastern part of the United States, in central America or in the Caribbean area.

Additional sites not yet completed appear to be designed for Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles - capable of travelling more than twice as far and thus capable of striking most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere, ranging as far north as Hudson's Bay, Canada and

as far south as Lima, Peru. In addition, medium range jet bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, are now being uncrated and assembled on Cuba, while the necessary air bases are being prepared.

This urgent transformation of Cuba into a prime strategic base by the presence of these large, long-range and clearly offensive weapons of sudden destruction constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas - in flagrant and deliberate defiance of the Rio Pact of 1947, the traditions of this nation and Hemisphere, the Joint Resolution of the 87th Congress and my own warnings to the Soviets on September 4 and 13. This action also contradicts the repeated assurances of Soviet spokesmen, both publicly and privately delivered, that the arms build-up in Cuba would retain its original defensive character, that the Soviet Union had no need or desire to station strategic missiles on the territory of any other nation.

The size of this undertaking makes clear that it had been planned some months ago. Yet only last month, after I had made clear the distinction between any introduction of ground-to-ground missiles and the existence of defensive anti-aircraft missiles, the Soviet Government publicly stated on September 11 that "the armaments and military equipment sent to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes", that "there is no need for the Soviet Union to shift its weapons ... for a retaliatory blow to any other country, for instance Cuba," and that "the Soviet Union has so powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union." That statement, I regret to say, was patently false.

Only last Thursday, as this offensive build-up was going on, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko told me in my office that he was instructed to make it clear once again, as he said the Soviet Government had already done, that Soviet assistance to Cuba "pursued solely the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba" that "training by Soviet specialists of Cuban nationals in handling defensive armaments was by no means offensive" and that "if it were otherwise, the Soviet Government would have never become involved in rendering such assistance." That statement also was dishonest and dishonorable.

Neither the United States of America nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute an "armed attack" under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Nuclear weapons are so destructive, and ballistic weapons are so swift, that any increased possibility of their use or any sudden change in their deployment may well be regarded as a definite threat to the peace.

For many years, both the Soviet Union and the United States - recognizing this fact - have deployed strategic weapons with great care, never upsetting the precarious status quo which ensured that these weapons would not be used in the absence of some vital challenge. Our own weapons systems, have never been secretly transferred to the territory of any other nation under a cloak of secrecy and deception; and our history - unlike that of the Soviets since World War Two - demonstrates that we have no desire to dominate or conquer any other nation or impose our system upon them. Nevertheless, American citizens have become adjusted to living daily on the bull's eye of Soviet missiles located inside the USSR or in

submarines. In that sense, missiles in Cuba add to an already clear and present danger - although, it should be noted, the nations of Latin America have never previously been subjected to a potential nuclear threat.

But this secret, swift and extraordinary build-up of communist missiles - in an area well-known to have a special and historical relationship to the United States and the Western Hemisphere - in violation of Soviet assurances - is a deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country, if our courage and our commitments are ever to be believed in the future by either friend or foe.

The 1930's taught a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to grow unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. This nation is opposed to war. We are also true to our word. Our unswerving objective, therefore, must be to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent the use of these missiles against this or any other country, and to secure the withdrawal or elimination of these missiles from within the Western Hemisphere.

Our policy has been one of patience and restraint, as befits a peaceful and powerful nation. We were determined not to be diverted from our central concerns by mere irritants and fanatics. But further action is now required - and it is underway; and these actions may only be the beginning. We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of world-wide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth - but let every nation know, be it friend or foe, that we will not shrink from that risk at any time it must be faced.

Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and that of the entire Western Hemisphere, and with the authority entrusted in me by the

Constitution as endorsed by the Resolution of the Congress, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

1) First: to halt this offensive build-up, a strict quarantine on all offensive weapons under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships bound for Cuba, from whatever nation or port, will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back. This quarantine will be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers. We are not at this time, however, denying access or the necessities of life as the Soviets attempted to do in their Berlin blockade of 1948.

2) Second: I have directed the continued and increased close surveillance of Cuba and its military build-up. The Foreign Ministers of the OAS in their Communiqué of October 6 rejected secrecy on such matters in this Hemisphere. Should offensive military preparation continue, thus increasing the threat to the Hemisphere, I have directed the armed forces to prepare for any eventualities: and I trust that, in the interest of both the Cuban people and the Soviet technicians at these sites, our inability to tolerate this threat will be recognized.

3) Third: It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any missile launched from Cuba as an attack by the Soviet Union requiring a massive retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

4) Fourth: As a necessary military precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo, evacuated the dependents of our personnel there and ordered additional military units to stand by on an alert basis.

5) Fifth: We are calling tonight for an immediate meeting of the Organ of Consultation under the Organization of American States, to consider this threat to hemispheric security and to invoke Articles 6 and 8

of the Rio Treaty in support of all necessary action. Our other allies around the world have also been alerted

6) Sixth: Under the Charter of the United Nations - and we subscribe to that Charter - we are asking tonight that an emergency meeting of the Security Council be convoked without delay to take action against this latest Soviet threat to world peace. Our Resolution will call for the dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive bases and weapons in Cuba, under the supervision of UN observers before the quarantine can be lifted.

7) Seventh and Finally: I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless and provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations. I call upon him further to abandon this course of world domination, and to join with me and other in an historic effort to end the perilous arms race and transform the history of man. He has an opportunity now to move the world back from the abyss of destruction - returning to his government's own words that it had no need to station missiles outside its own territory, and withdrawing these weapons from Cuba - be refraining from any action which will widen or deepen the present crisis - and then by resuming our mutual search for peaceful and permanent solutions.

This nation is prepared to present its case against this Soviet threat to peace and our own proposals for a peaceful world at any time and in any forum - in the OAS, in the United Nations, or in any other meeting that could be useful. We have in the past made strenuous efforts to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. We have proposed the elimination of all arms and overseas bases in a fair and effective disarmament treaty. We are prepared to discuss new proposals for the removal of tensions on both sides - including the possibilities of a genuinely independent Cuba, free to

determine its own destiny. We have no wish to war with the Soviet Union; for we are a peaceful people who desire to live in peace with all other peoples.

But it is difficult to settle or even discuss these problems in an atmosphere of intimidation. That is why this latest Soviet threat - or any other threat which is made either independently or in response to our actions this week - must and will be met with determination. Any hostile action anywhere in the world against the safety and freedom of peoples to whom we are committed - including the brave people of West Berlin - will be met by whatever action is needed.

Finally, I want to say a few words to the captive people of Cuba, to whom this speech is being directly carried by every available medium. I speak to you as a friend, as an admirer of your dedication to freedom and justice, as one who knows of your deep attachment to your fatherland. Along with my fellow Americans, I have shared the great hopes of your nationalist revolution promising liberty and justice for all. And I have watched with deep sorrow how the ideals of that revolution were betrayed - and how your fatherland fell under foreign domination. Now your leaders are no longer Cuban leaders - inspired by the great principles of your nationalist revolution - they are puppets and agents of an international conspiracy which has turned Cuba into a bane of aggression against your friends and neighbors in the Americas. These new weapons are not in your interest. They contribute nothing to your peace and well-being. They cannot even contribute to the security of Cuba, but only undermine it. We know you did not consent to the transformation of your island into a target for nuclear war - the first Latin American country to become involved in this grim

confrontation - the first Latin American country to have these weapons on its soil.

That is why we have no quarrel with you, the people of Cuba, only sympathy and hope. We know your lives are being used as pawns by those who deny you freedom. We have no wish to cause you to suffer or to impose any system upon you.

Many times in the past, the Cuban people have risen to throw out tyrants - both foreign and domestic - who tried to destroy their liberty. And I have no doubt that the vast majority of Cubans today look forward to the time when they will once again be free - free to choose their own leaders, to select their own system, to own their own land, to speak and write and worship without fear or degradation. And when foreign domination is ended, and the use of Cuba as a base of subversion and aggression has ceased, we shall gladly welcome her back to the society of free nations and to the associations of this Hemisphere. For our goal in the world today is peace and freedom - and that includes the peace and freedom of the Cuban people.

My fellow citizens, let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out. No one can foresee precisely what course it will take or what costs or casualties will be incurred. Many months of sacrifice and self-discipline lie ahead - months in which both our will and our patience will be tested by those who would have us do more and those who would have us do less - months in which many threats and denunciations will keep us aware of our danger. But the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing - to be paralyzed by fear - to go back on our word.

The path we have chosen for the present is not perfect, as no path is - but it is the one most consistent with our character and courage as a nation, and our commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high - but Americans have always paid it. One path we shall never choose - the path of surrender or submission.

Our goal is not the victory of might but the vindication of right - not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this Hemisphere, and hopefully around the world. God willing, this goal will be achieved.